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1 According to the NPD Group, GFK Chart-Track and Activision Blizzard internal estimates, including toys and accessories. 2 According to the NPD Group, GFK Chart-Track and Activision Blizzard internal estimates, including in-game content sales. 3 NPD franchise sales based on physical unit sales. 4 Based on Bungie internal estimates.

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42 **ENERGIZING THE EVERGREENS**

With several new content initiatives, Cartoon Network Enterprises is poised to offer a broader portfolio and more opportunities in licensing and events.



24 **LICENSING EXPO JAPAN READIES INAUGURAL SHOW**

The inaugural Licensing Expo Japan will be held in conjunction with IFF MAGIC Japan, April 26-28, at Tokyo Big Sight.



Licensing in 2016 A Year in Review

28 From major executive moves to a host of acquisitions and joint ventures to an increased emphasis on 360-degree entertainment properties and classic brands, here's the top trends that shaped 2016.

34 **LEGENDARY: TAPPING INTO UNTAPPED POTENTIAL**

38 **FUNKO: POP CULTURE PURVEYORS**

52 **FASHION HITS**
Blockbuster movies and hit TV shows will prove to be **MAGICAL** this spring as entertainment franchises inspire fashion collaborations..



60 **NY TOY FAIR PREVIEW**

This year's toy fair season will culminate in New York City with a remarkable lineup of blockbuster toys from the world's largest licensors and licensees.



46 **A LICENSE TO RELAX**

CEO Doug Wood examines the strategy and value of licensing that have helped drive the growth and expansion of this popular lifestyle brand.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENTS

06 **EDITOR'S NOTE**
2017: Déjà Vu

08 **BIZ BRIEFS**
Retail news, licensing deals and more.

ON THE COVER



Peter Yoder, vice president, Cartoon Network Enterprises, North America



Doug Wood, chief executive officer, Tommy Bahama

2017: DÉJÀ VU

The 17 trends that will define brand licensing in 2017.



by TONY LISANTI
global editorial director

Following a year of unprecedented events, 2017 is shaping up to be a similar year for the brand licensing and retail sectors, while an aura of uncertainty permeates as the new administration begins to implement its political agenda. Politics aside, looking ahead to 2017, here are 17 observations that not only reflect key trends, but also indicate how eerily similar this new year will be with a continuation of major trends from 2016.

1. More acquisitions likely. Following the announcement in October that AT&T will acquire Time Warner for a reported \$85 billion, the age of the mega merger will likely continue in the entertainment business as content, customers and scale are critical.

2. The China factor. With his bold proclamation last year to own all six Hollywood studios, Wang Jianlin, chairman of Dalian Wanda Corp., could continue to execute his plan. The company owns Mtime, Legendary and formed a joint venture with Sony last year, so stay tuned for the richest man in China's next move.

3. Record box office performance. The North American box office generated \$11.4 billion in 2016, smashing the previous year's record. And with the number of blockbusters in the pipeline for 2017, another record year is not out of the question.

4. Disney dominance. The Walt Disney Company became the first studio to top \$7 billion in box office sales worldwide in 2016, driven by *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, *Finding Dory* and *Captain America: Civil War*, the top three performers respectively at the box office in the U.S. Look for more of the same in 2017 with *Beauty and the Beast*, *Gardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2*, *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales*, *Cars 3*, *Thor: Ragnarok* and *Star Wars: Episode VIII*, plus others.

5. Superhero genre. In addition to the aforementioned Marvel films, *The LEGO Batman Movie*, *Spider-Man: Homecoming*, *Wonder Woman* and *Justice League* are all in the pipeline, proving that the superhero genre is still incredibly strong, yet causing concern that it might begin to wane.

6. Location-based entertainment. The recent announcement by Viacom that it will build a theme park in China is yet another on a long list of examples that live events of all sorts around the globe are a key strategy among the world's licensors.

7. '90s retro. Nickelodeon made an impact with its revival of popular 1990s shows such as "Rugrats," and

this trend will continue, reinforcing that retro sells.

8. eSports. More leagues, more teams, more products along with huge fan participation make this a viable business with strong licensing potential.

9. Shelf space after Disney. With the widespread popularity of *Star Wars* and numerous other Disney properties, the battle for retail shelf space continues to be a challenge for other licensors. It's become part of the business of licensing.

10. Hatchimals hope. The incredible popularity of Spin Master's Hatchimals this past holiday season is another reassuring case study that new brands can break through with consumers and retailers.

11. For e-commerce, the future is now. As Internet retail sales outpace traditional brick-and-mortar, the dynamics of retail merchandising is changing rapidly and creating new opportunities for licensed brands.

12. Executive changes. For various business reasons, major studios have new leadership including Warner Bros., NBCUniversal, Sony and Fox, and realignments have changed the structure of many CP divisions, putting the emphasis on different initiatives from events to international expansion.

13. Virtual reality and augmented reality. The VR experience will continue to evolve, not only for gaming but also for various events, sports and theme park attractions. "Pokémon Go" set the bar, and other similar games will hit the market.

14. Experiential retail. Apple has certainly been doing it, Microsoft has followed suit and now more traditional stores are adopting it as well. Consumers continue to demand more interactive and better experiences at traditional brick-and-mortar retail stores. Toys 'R' Us is now testing a smaller, more interactive store that enhances the overall shopping experience, engages customers and better showcases brands.

15. Celebrity licensing. More and more sports personalities, music artists and television personalities, along with traditional celebs, are looking to licensing for brand-name recognition, and the growth in e-commerce and mobile commerce is making it easier to sell products to loyal fans.

16. Ambassador for licensing. Now that celebrity licensor President Donald Trump is in the White House, perhaps he would consider appointing a guru of licensing who could address key industry issues including various taxes and counterfeiting.

17. Looking to 2018. There's a strong case to simply say, as the late sports figure Yogi Berra made part of his vernacular, it will be "déjà vu all over again." ©



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Licensing Thought Leaders to Converge at NYC Summit

The second annual NYC Licensing Summit will bring together more than 20 high-level executive speakers with close to 500 industry decision makers March 2-3.

The exclusive conference and networking event is set to take place at the New York Marriott Marquis in Times Square, and, in addition to a series of topline sessions on new trends and innovations in the brand licensing marketplace, will also feature enhanced networking opportunities for attendees.

Among the executives slated to speak at the event are:

- Mike Sepso of **Activision Blizzard Media Networks** and founder of **Major League Gaming** will take an in-depth look at the eSports phenomenon;
- Perry Wolfman of **CAA-GBG**, the world's largest licensing agency, will talk about the dynamics of working with celebrities alongside actress and entrepreneur **Drew Barrymore**;
- Peter Yoder of **Cartoon Network Enterprises** will offer insights into the changing TV marketplace for children's content;
- Dell Furano of **Epic Rights**, which represents KISS, AC/DC and Celine Dion, among others, will give insights into the arena of music licensing;
- Giuseppe Faranna of **Head Sport**, owner of the Head and Penn sports equipment brands, will discuss the company's corporate branding initiatives;
- Dave Jones of **Iconix** will offer the opening keynote on Day One;
- Amy Kule of **Macy's Parade** will explore new opportunities in location-based entertainment alongside Lisa Silverman Meyers of **Nickelodeon Viacom Consumer Products** and Jill Tully of **A+E Networks**;

NY© SUMMIT

MARCH 2-3, 2017

- Carlos Saavedra of **PepsiCo North America** alongside Debra Joester, president of the brand's licensing agency, **The Joester Loria Group**, will look at the food and beverage giant's licensing program;
- Ken Wyse of **PVH Corp** will focus on fashion licensing;
- Yehuda Shmidman of **Sequential Brands Group** will look at ways to build brand equity in the Day Two opening keynote;
- Jamie Stevens of **Sony Pictures Entertainment** will discuss entertainment licensing in China;
- Scott Bannell, former vice president of brand management at **Stanley Black & Decker**, alongside Michael Stone, chairman of the company's licensing agency, **Beanstalk**, will look at the company's robust licensing program;
- Eric Beder of **Wunderlich Securities** will offer insights from Wall Street; and
- Robert D'Loren of **Xcel Brands** will discuss how to stay relevant in the world of fashion licensing.

Additional speakers will be announced soon including executives from leading retailers Tesco and Spencer's, among others, who will offer a behind-the-scenes look at what drives their merchandising strategies, and a panel of major sports leagues and players' associations.

"The NYC Summit is a must-attend event for anyone in the brand licensing industry looking to learn from the sector's biggest innovators and get ahead of the current trends in the marketplace," says Tony Lisanti, global editorial director, *License Global* magazine and moderator of the NYC Summit. "Simply put, this is a not-to-miss opportunity to make the connections and gather the knowledge executives need to build and enhance their business in 2017."

This year's NYC Summit will also feature a number of expanded networking opportunities including an app that will allow attendees to make new connections before and during the event.

Tickets are now on sale: \$995 for LIMA members (contact your LIMA representative for the promo code) and \$1,095 for all others. Space is limited and last year's event sold out, so interested parties are encouraged to secure tickets early.

The NYC Summit is developed by *License Global* magazine, part of UBM's Global Licensing Group, also organizer of Licensing Expo and Brand Licensing Europe, and in partnership with the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association, the industry's leading trade organization. This year's sponsors include Platinum Sponsor Concept One Accessories and Silver Sponsors Uwäre Brands and Octane5, and is also being supported by additional sponsors Boy Scouts of America, FabNY, OpSec Security and Trevco.



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A close-up of a hand holding a wand, with a shower of sparks or magical particles falling around it. The hand is wearing a red sleeve and a grey cuff. The background is a light, textured surface with many small, dark, irregular shapes scattered across it.

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Power-Packed Brand Strategy

The longest-running kids' action series in TV history, "Power Rangers," and parent company Saban Brands are developing new content, products, collaborations and marketing partnerships prior to the release of the upcoming *Power Rangers* film.

"'Power Rangers' continues to be a pop culture phenomenon as we drive brand elevation and engagement," the "Power Rangers" marketing team said in a press release. "It's exciting for us to maintain our brand's incredible foundation while creating new and reimagined opportunities for the franchise... that said, while we have great new products and campaigns launching for the upcoming feature film, our focus is always on growing, evolving and delivering new products and opportunities for fans to engage with the entire 'Power Rangers' franchise across multiple touchpoints in innovative and modern ways."

The 24-year-old "Power Rangers" franchise—known for its positive messages, diversity and global reach—currently has a fan base of all ages, spanning the world over. The launch of the new movie, in partnership with

Lionsgate, will give the "Power Rangers" brand the opportunity to continue to expand its offerings and grow.

"As examples to further speak to how this strategy is translating for a broader consumer base, we recently saw the 'Power Rangers' brand featured on *Vogue.com* as well as on the runway at New York Fashion Week in September 2016 and London Men's Fashion Week in January 2017," the release said.

"Additionally, fashion influencers such

as Gigi Hadid, Olivia Culpo, Hailey Baldwin and Jamie Chung, etc., have worn 'Power Rangers' apparel and Kourtney Kardashian and her family, amongst others, dressed as Power Rangers for Halloween. We are also really diversifying in retail as we've seen 'Power Rangers' on a wide range of retail shelves from Toys 'R' Us and Target to Selfridges and Bergdorf Goodman."

In addition to longtime partner Bandai, the brand has a roster of more than 90 global licensees for the *Power Rangers* movie, and more than 150 for the core/TV franchise. Licensing categories range from toy, apparel/accessories, collectibles, costumes, bedding/décor, publishing and video games, among others, for preschool kids to adults. The company is also launching an extensive line of feature film products as an extension of the overall franchise.

Starting this past holiday season, presales for key *Power Rangers* movie toy products began to roll out. As the film's release date approaches, additional categories will be on shelves globally, according to the company.

"As part of our integrated strategy for the 'Power Rangers' franchise, including the movie, we have partnered with global retailers to develop unique brand campaigns that speak to and engage with their shoppers," the release said. "This year, you will see expanded product offerings across current and new retailers around the world supported by integrated retail marketing campaigns for fans of all ages."



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For more information on licensing opportunities, please contact Jeff Peters:
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For retail inquiries, please contact Michele Caruso: Michele.Caruso@hbo.com / 212-512-7391

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Fox Names New CP President, Team

Fox Television Group and Twentieth Century Fox Film have appointed former DreamWorks Animation executive Jim Fielding to head their consumer products and innovation division.

As president, the industry veteran will oversee licensing, product development and new business opportunities in the consumer retail space across Fox Television Group, Twentieth Century Fox Film and FX Networks.

Fielding succeeds Jeffrey Godsick, former president of Fox Consumer Products, who stepped down from his position in May 2016 to join Sony Pictures Motion Group as executive vice president of worldwide partnerships.

Fielding brings more than 25 years of experience to the role and most recently worked as global head of consumer products and retail for DreamWorks Animation. He also served as the chief executive officer

of Claire's Stores, where he oversaw the retail chain's growth and international development worldwide. Prior to that, he was president of Disney Stores Worldwide.

Before his 11-year tenure at Disney, Fielding served as general merchandise manager for the co-ed division of Lands' End. Fielding has also held key merchandising roles at companies including The Gap, The J. Peterman Company and Dayton-Hudson.

Twentieth Century Fox Consumer Products also announced a new leadership team reporting to Fielding.

The group consists of Kirk Bloomgarden to the role of senior vice president, global creative and product development; Ann Buckingham as senior vice president, global creative and product development; Tim Erickson to serve as senior vice president, global licensing and operations;

Erin Morris will be senior vice president, global retail business development; and Eva Steertz as senior vice president, global brand business development.

"With this new leadership in place we will begin to build global centers of excellence to lead 20th Century Fox Consumer Products into the future," Fielding says. "I am excited to lead this talented group of individuals, whom collectively, have over 100 years of experience in entertainment licensing & merchandising."



Activision Blizzard Launches New CP Division

Activision Blizzard has launched a new consumer products division that will further bolster its global growth strategy by creating new ways for fans to connect with its franchises and characters.

The new division will also serve as a pillar

in the video game company's expansion of its platforms through which it offers its properties to audiences, including interactive content, television, film, competitive gaming and mobile.

Tim Kilpin, a veteran of Mattel and Disney, has been named as the division's chief executive officer and president.

Activision Publishing, Blizzard Entertainment and King Digital's consumer product teams will also join the new division.

"Inspiring play, competition and community underpins everything we do, and giving audiences new ways to experience our franchises is core to this commitment," says Bobby Kotick, chief executive officer, Activision Blizzard. "Under Tim's leadership, we will elevate our consumer product offerings to the same level of exceptional quality as our games and transform the ways audiences connect with the characters they love in their everyday lives."

In his new role, Kilpin will lead the development of consumer products to expand and deepen audience engagement with Activision Blizzard's franchise through long-term retail partnerships, products and new consumer experiences.

Prior to joining Activision Blizzard, Kilpin served as Mattel's president and chief

commercial officer. Previously, he served as executive vice president for Mattel's boys' and girls' division—leading global brand strategy, marketing, product design and development, consumer products and content develop for the company's brands, including Barbie, Hot Wheels and Monster High.

Before that, he was the executive vice president of franchise management for The Walt Disney Company, where he oversaw global cross-category franchise plans for the Disney Princess, Winnie the Pooh, Mickey Mouse and Pixar properties.

Activision Publishing is the No. 122 largest licensor in the world, according to *License Global's* annual Top 150 Global Licensors report, with \$140 million in retail sales of licensed merchandise worldwide in 2015.

"Activision Blizzard is a global entertainment powerhouse, and its combination of iconic franchises and massive audience reach offers incredible opportunities for retailers and partners," says Kilpin. "I'm excited to lead this newly formed division and join Activision Blizzard's already incredibly talented consumer products team in delivering powerful new partnerships and even more touchpoints to audiences."



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Clinique Draws on Crayola

Beauty brand Clinique and Crayola have teamed up to create a limited-edition collection of co-branded lip color balms.

The 10-piece line will feature a spin on Clinique's classic Chubby Stick lip color balm, transforming the beauty product to resemble a Crayola crayon with colors such as brick red, wild strawberry, mango tango, fuzzy wuzzy and red velvet, among others.

"[Clinique's] Chubby Stick Moisturizing Lip Color Balm barrel and packaging evokes a crayon in its silhouette," according to Crayola. "We worked closely to bring the colors of Crayola to life, expanding the experience and joy of coloring to be a part of everyday personal beauty."

The limited-edition Clinique x Crayola collection is now available at the beauty retailer.

"Both Crayola Crayons and Clinique Chubby Sticks are love marks," says Janet Pardo, senior vice president, product development, Clinique. "Each of them are recognizable, completely unmistakable when you pull them out from the box."



LEGO Creates New Brand Group

The Kirk Kristiansen family, owner of the LEGO brand, has established a new division for the company, titled the LEGO Brand Group.

The new group will facilitate the owner governance of all LEGO brand related activities, including the LEGO Group and LEGO Education, as well as how the brand is being expressed by entities such as the LEGO Foundation and in LEGO Land attractions. Additionally, the purpose of the

LEGO Brand Group is also to protect and develop the LEGO brand.

"Our family ownership is deeply rooted in the LEGO idea, which is about learning and development through play and a unique, creative play system that offers endless possibilities," says Thomas Kirk Kristiansen, fourth generation owner, LEGO Group. "With our recent growth and globalization come new and exciting opportunities for the brand, and we establish the LEGO Brand Group to look into these new opportunities."

Jørgen Vig Knudstorp, chief executive officer, LEGO Group, will chair the new entity in close partnership with deputy chair Kirk Kristiansen. Additionally, due to his new position, the board of directors of LEGO A/S will nominate Vig Knudstorp to become chairman of the board in May 2017.

Niels Jacobsen, present chairman of the board of directors, LEGO A/S, will continue in his role as deputy chairman in KIRKBI A/S.

"Over the past 12 years, Vig Knudstorp has developed an outstanding knowledge and understanding of the opportunities and challenges for the LEGO Group and the LEGO brand," says Jacobsen. "Now is the right time to use Jørgen's capacity in a broader role. I look forward to continue working with Jørgen in the future and to continue my work with Kjeld and Thomas Kirk Kristiansen in the KIRKBI A/S board of directors."

Additionally, Bali Padda, currently chief operations officer of the LEGO Group, has been appointed to replace Vig Knudstorp as CEO as of Jan. 1.



Alibaba Inks Olympic Partnership

The International Olympic Committee and the Alibaba Group have secured a long-term partnership that will last through 2028.

Joining the Olympic Partner worldwide sponsorship program, Alibaba will become the official Cloud Services and E-Commerce Platform Services partner as well as a founding partner of the Olympic Channel TV service.

Furthermore, Alibaba's contributions to the Olympic Movement will include a cloud computing infrastructure and cloud services to help the Games operate more efficiently, effectively and securely; the creation of a global e-commerce platform for Olympic stakeholders to participate and connect with fans seeking officially licensed products, and selected sports products, on a worldwide basis; and leveraging Alibaba's digital media to develop and customize the Olympic Channel for a Chinese audience.

"In this new digital world, Alibaba is uniquely positioned to help the IOC achieve a variety of key objectives outlined in 'Olympic Agenda 2020,' while positively shaping the future of the Olympic Movement," says Thomas Bach, president, IOC. "This is a ground-breaking, innovative alliance, and will help drive efficiencies in the organization of the Olympic Games through 2028, whilst also supporting the global development of digital opportunities including the Olympic Channel."

Additionally, Alibaba will support the organizers of each edition of the

Olympic Games, as well as the Olympic Movement, around the world through advertising and promotional use of Olympic marks and imagery as well as marks from the National Olympic committees.

"Alibaba is proud to empower the International Olympic Committee in a game-changing digital transformation, while moving another step closer toward our goal to serve 2 billion consumers," said Daniel Zhang, chief executive officer, Alibaba Group. "We will leverage our experience in serving a young user base to help connect more young people to the Olympic Movement, helping to strengthen our brand through this historic partnership."

Alibaba is the first company to secure a long-term commitment to the IOC through 2028 and the first Chinese company to commit to the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022.



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THE SHOW FLOOR WITH HBO

Josh Goodstadt of HBO discusses how the media giant attends Licensing Expo to meet with its current licensees as well as spot new trends and products.

Josh Goodstadt, vice president of global licensing and retail at HBO, first started attending Licensing Expo in 2002 while working at the National Football League Players' Association. After joining HBO in 2007, the long-time attendee re-focused his efforts on TV licensing for hit series like "The Sopranos" and "Sex and the City." However, as the network added more cult programming, such as "Game of Thrones," it also began to utilize Licensing Expo and Brand Licensing Europe as a mechanism to see the latest trends and products as well as to make sure they're giving fans the types of merchandise they want.

How has your experience at Licensing Expo changed throughout the years?

The big names at Licensing Expo are still the same even after more than a decade of attending—Warner Bros., Sony, Nickelodeon, etc.—but the size and scope of the show has grown exponentially right alongside the licensing industry itself.

In addition to the big players, you now also see more emerging IPs and independent licensees on the floor looking for business opportunities. For me, both Licensing Expo and Brand Licensing Europe have also become much busier as the licensing program for "Game of Thrones" continues to grow each year.

What makes attending Licensing Expo valuable to your company?

It's a great way to have quick face-to-face meetings with partners that we don't get to see all the time. While we do meet with new prospects, most of our new business development is done throughout the course of the year, with Licensing Expo serving as a nice opportunity to meet in person. We tend to go a bit deeper in our meetings at BLE since it's one of the only opportunities we have for in-person contact with our international partners each year.

What is your main goal of the show?

We communicate with our licensees on a daily/weekly basis, so our goal is really having a chance to meet face-to-face with current partners. As easy as it is to get work done over the phone and email, it's still vital to our business to have some face time with our licensees.

What is your strategy while attending?

Before setting our agenda for the show, we reach out to our licensing partners to see who is going to be in attendance. We set aside time to meet with those partners, but also to just spend some time walking the floor checking out the latest trends and products.

What do you look for on the show floor and in potential partners?

Between the Internet and the products we see available at retail, we already have a good idea of what's out in the marketplace, but Licensing Expo gives us a great opportunity to immerse ourselves in the industry and to get an idea of what's coming next. We don't necessarily walk the show floor looking for new partners—most of our prospecting is done outside of the show. But it does give us the chance to check our blind spots and make sure we're giving fans of our shows the types of products they want.

When it comes to navigating the show floor, what advice would you give to new attendees?

If it's your first time attending, I would suggest walking the entire floor so you can understand the full scope of the show, and you should also set up your meetings well in advance. From our own perspective, we get booked weeks in advance and can't accommodate walk-up meetings, so booking appointments in advance is a must. ©



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LICENSING EXPO JAPAN

READIES INAUGURAL SHOW

The inaugural Licensing Expo Japan will be held in conjunction with IFF MAGIC Japan, April 26-28, at Tokyo Big Sight.

In order to create an international platform for both local and international companies, UBM's Global Licensing Group, organizers of Licensing Expo, in collaboration with the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association, will launch a new licensing and brand extension networking event, Licensing Expo Japan, in Tokyo this April.

Drawing on the industry expertise and networks of UBM and LIMA, the new trade show will be the first business-to-business event to be held for the industry, and by the industry, in the Japanese market. Licensing Expo Japan will aim to connect Japan with Asia and other global territories, as well as enable attendees to meet new partners and expand their business.

Licensing Expo Japan will be co-located with the fashion exhibition IFF MAGIC and will take place, April 26-28, at Tokyo Big Sight.

"We believe that Japan's licensing business has huge potential to grow because Japanese licensors own a large number of

brands and characters that are suitable for the local and international market," says Jessica Blue, senior vice president, licensing, UBM. "At the same time, there are many high-quality Japanese manufacturers who can be great licensing partners for international properties. Those Japanese players, both licensors and licensees, who have never ventured out from the Japanese market, simply need to have more opportunities to develop their international network with players around the world.

"Therefore, I am pleased that many international and local agents have already decided to participate in the Japanese event. They will serve as a bridge for both local and international players, as well as help understand and support each other in order to develop their properties in both Japan and the international market."

More than 50 licensors, agents and brands have signed on for the inaugural show (check out some of the brands that will be in attendance on page 26).

"As the leading association for the industry, we are dedicated to providing education and support for licensing professionals around the world," says Charles Riotto, president, LIMA. "Our members have voiced their need for a high-quality event in Japan, and we are excited to deliver it with our long-standing partners at UBM."

Japan is the world's third largest market for licensed products, following the U.S. and the U.K., and generates

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\$700 million in royalty revenues as well as nearly \$12 billion in retail sales each year, according to LIMA's Global Licensing Survey. A wide range of both local and international brands and characters are present in the region across categories such as fashion, toys and stationery. Among local licensors, there are still a large number that have not debuted in the international market, particularly those from the entertainment industry such as animated films, cartoons and games.

Additionally, LIMA will host a three-day educational conference at the show, which will be available for both licensors and licensees.

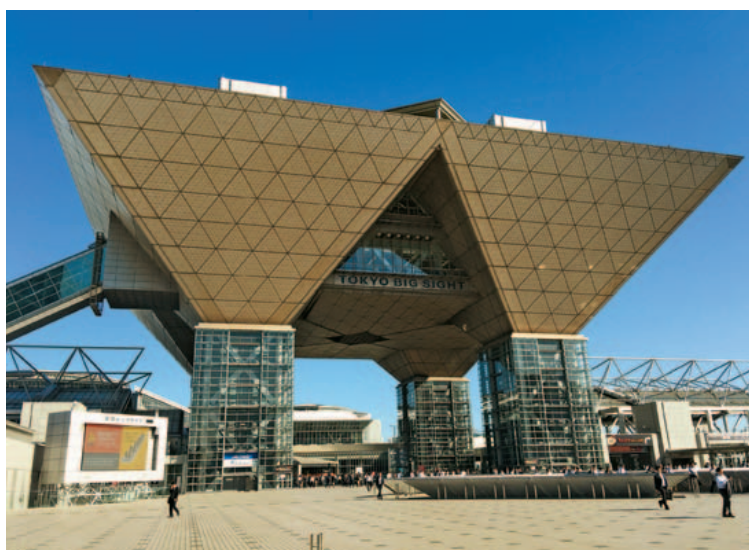
"The program arranged by LIMA covers a wide range of topics that will be of interest not only to professionals in the licensing industry, but also manufacturers and retailers who have never been involved in the licensing business before, but are interested in starting," says

Christopher Eve, managing director, UBM Japan. "UBM organizes 33 trade shows in Japan in a variety of industries such as health products, beauty, food and jewelry. We will make full use of those databases to promote Licensing Expo Japan, and we expect that the conference program will be a big reason for various types of manufacturers and retailers to visit the show and to start investigating their own business potential in the licensing market."

Licensing Expo Japan's co-location with IFF MAGIC Japan, an established fashion event organized by UBM Japan that features a slate of apparel brands and retailers

from the region, will further boost the event.

"IFF MAGIC Japan is a well-established B2B fashion event and is organized in collaboration with the *Senken Shinbun*, the most influential daily newspaper in Japan's fashion industry," says Eve. "IFF MAGIC Japan is a must-attend event for all fashion brands and retailers in Japan." ©





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Licensing in 2016 A Year in Review

From major executive moves to a host of acquisitions and joint ventures to an increased emphasis on 360-degree entertainment properties and classic brands, here are the top trends that shaped 2016.

Last year was marked by a chain of acquisitions and joint ventures among several of the world's top licensors and agents, including NBCUniversal, AT&T, Walmart, Global Brands Group, Creative Artists Agency and more.

Furthermore, 2016 saw a large number of change-ups in top leadership at big-name entertainment companies such as Disney Consumer Products and Interactive Media, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, NBCUniversal, WME/IMG, Viacom and Discovery Communications. In addition to the entertainment powerhouses, several agencies, including CPLG and Iconix, as well as the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association announced changes to their top leadership positions.

Meanwhile, a raft of brands continued to expand their 360-degree strategies with the addition of new content development across television, publishing and more; live experiences such as stage shows and theme parks; and, of course, a multitude of new licensees.

The Biggest Shakeups

Possibly the biggest merger of the year was Global Brands Group and Creative Artists Agency's decision to join forces to create CAA-GBG Global Brand Management Group. The joint venture, which also includes licensing agency TLC, created the world's largest licensing agency, with \$11.8 billion in retail sales, according to *License Global's* Top 20 Global Licensing Agents report.

Meanwhile, Hollywood was profuse with ownership changes in 2016. NBCUniversal acquired DreamWorks Animation in April, which not only brought together two entertainment powerhouses, but also the No. 11 and No. 18 largest licensors in the world. The acquisition also bolstered NBCU's kids' and family entertainment offerings with DreamWorks' various franchises such as *Shrek*, *Kung Fu Panda* and *How to Train Your Dragon*.

The Dalian Wanda Group was also a big player in the entertainment industry last year with the acquisitions of AMC, Legendary Entertainment and the Chinese online media outlet and e-commerce platform Mtime, as well as a joint venture with Sony.

Additionally, AT&T made an \$85 billion bid for Time





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Warner, which solidified its growing interest in the entertainment sector. Although it is still too early to tell, the acquisition could result in a host of opportunities for licensed products targeting bigger audiences and new fan bases.

In a completely different sector, retailer Walmart ramped up its e-commerce initiatives with the purchase of Jet.com, one of the fastest growing e-commerce companies in the U.S. According to Walmart, the acquisition will add new capabilities to its e-commerce platform as well as expand its customer reach.

Finally, in early 2016, Activision bought eSports leader Major League Gaming, which develops professional gaming events. The purchase not only adds live streaming capabilities to Activision's roster,

but will also further enable the video game company to expand its reach across the rapidly growing eSports industry while creating what they deem "the ESPN of eSports."

Leadership Change-Ups

Similar to 2015, last year was marked by a multitude of executive change-ups from the world's major licensors, starting at the top with Disney Consumer Products and Interactive Media. In February, James Pitaro moved from his role as co-chair of DCPI to head the division, following co-chair Leslie Ferraro's departure from the company to pursue marketing and consumer engagement projects.

Meanwhile, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, the world's No. 5 largest licensor, named Pam Lifford to succeed Brad Globe, former president of WBCP, who announced his retirement in August 2015 after more than a decade at the helm. As WBCP's president, Lifford oversees all of the division's business functions, including domestic and international licensing, worldwide marketing, business and legal affairs, finance and retail business development for WBCP's portfolio of franchises including *Batman v Superman*, *Harry Potter*, "Looney Tunes," "Scooby Doo" and many more. WBCP also appointed Soo Koo, who formerly served as vice president of product development at DCPI, as its chief creative officer.

Other major executive moves in 2016 include:

- Jeffrey Godsick resigned from his role as president of Fox Consumer Products to join Sony Pictures Motion Picture Group as executive vice president of worldwide partnerships. Former DreamWorks executive Jim Fielding was announced as his replacement in January.
- Former Iconix executive Leigh Anne Brodsky, who served as managing director for Peanuts Worldwide, stepped down to take on the role of executive vice president at Discovery Communications' Discovery Global Enterprises unit, where she

now oversees consumer products, location-based entertainment and program sales worldwide.

- In November, Maura Regan exited her role as senior vice president and general manager of international media businesses at Sesame Workshop to join LIMA as executive vice president. She will now help broaden the scope of the organization's services and offerings to the global industry.
- Iconix appointed John Haugh to serve as the company's president and chief executive officer, following the exit of founder Neil Cole, who stepped down as CEO, chairman and president in August 2016 to pursue other business opportunities. In addition to Haugh's appointment, interim CEO Peter Cuneo transitioned to executive chairman of the brand management company.
- In addition to naming a new president and CEO, Iconix also tapped Rosalind Nowicki, formerly of Twentieth Century Fox, to lead its entertainment division and Peanuts Worldwide.
- The board of directors at Viacom promoted Robert Bakish to serve as acting president and CEO in November before announcing he would take on the position fulltime in December. He succeeds Tom Dooley, who announced he would be leaving the media giant in September after serving as interim CEO.
- WME/IMG named Mark Shapiro and Ioris Francini to serve as co-presidents of the company.
- Universal Music Group appointed Mat Vlasic as chief executive officer of global merchandising for Bravado following the departure of Tom Bennett.
- Endemol Shine North America upped Tamaya Petteway to serve as senior vice president for its new Brand and Licensing Partnerships division.
- Former Fathom Events executive Carol Nygren also left her position to join NBCUniversal as vice president of worldwide live entertainment, spearheading the company's strategy and development for cross-category live events and entertainment.
- At the end of the year, Amy Kule, executive producer, parade and fireworks, and group vice president, annual events and partnership marketing at Macy's, announced she would leave the





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company in March in order to expand her professional footprint. Kule has been part of the Macy's team for 21 years and was instrumental in the growth of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, which celebrated its 90th anniversary last year.

- Martin Cribbs joined Beanstalk as vice president of brand management and was tapped to lead the agency's new Icon Representation division, which represents the personality rights of legendary icons across licensing, advertising and more.
- In December, Rosa Zeegers joined National Geographic after serving as a brand strategy consultant. In her new role as executive vice president of consumer products and experiences, the former Mattel executive will oversee the company's global licensing, merchandising, travel, location-based entertainment and live businesses.

Giving Classic Franchises New Life

Although 2016 revealed a raft of new properties, classic brands such as "Star Trek" and "Rugrats," among others, saw a resurgence through new products, original programming, live events and more.

Defining what it means to be a true evergreen property, the "Star Trek" brand marked its 50th anniversary last year, and is looking ahead to the next 50 years with a new TV series that is set to premiere on CBS in the first half of this year. To mark the milestone, CBS Consumer Products unveiled a wide-reaching merchandising and fan outreach program spanning collectibles, apparel, toys and more.

Meanwhile, Nickelodeon unveiled a number of '90s-themed products in 2016—ranging from apparel to stationery to electronics and more—for brands including "Double Dare," "Ren & Stimpy" and "Rugrats." Beyond Nickelodeon, other classic brands—including Care Bears, Felix the Cat and "Teletubbies"—were revived through a combination of new merchandise, agency appointments and re-booted TV series.

Furthermore, entertainment companies around the world were able to both give their classic franchise new life, and extend their current properties through a variety of live experiences. Children's favorites like "Sesame Street" and "Paw Patrol" unveiled global live shows; Pepsi unveiled its first U.S.-based restaurant; Paws, Inc., the licensor of Garfield, teamed for children's education and activity centers in China; Viacom grew its footprint with new Nickelodeon Family entertainment centers in Europe; and Studio 100 partnered with grocery retailer Lidl to create "Maya the Bee"-inspired playgrounds; among many more.



Other Top Stories from 2016

■ **Major Licensor Becomes U.S. President**—The 2016 campaign and election of Donald Trump as President of the United States kindled discussions within nearly every industry around the globe, and the licensing industry was no exception. Whether Trump's political career will help or hurt his brand remains to be seen, but his campaign did result in backlash for several of his licensing partnerships. Either way, the Trump brand will move into unprecedented waters in the world of celebrity licensing now that he is in office.

■ **Hasbro: The Next Chapter in Storytelling**—Last year, Hasbro continued to take steps to move from a traditional toy company to a global entertainment and licensing powerhouse through content development across TV, publishing and more. Among its new initiatives, Hasbro announced a slate of new content including new *Transformers*



films; a *My Little Pony* film; original programming for Netflix; and the recently debuted "Hanazuki" brand.

■ **LEGO Creates New Brand Group**—In December, LEGO unveiled plans to continue its resurgence with the creation of a new division, titled the LEGO Brand Group. The new division's sole purpose will be to protect and further develop the LEGO Brand with new opportunities.

■ **"Five Nights at Freddy's" Adds New Licensees**—Scottgames' horror-themed video game "Five Nights at Freddy's" became a phenomenon last year and continually added to its roster of licensees. Launched in 2014, the game appointed Striker Entertainment as its licensing agent in May 2016.

■ **Mattel Launches New Content Arm**—The toy company took its storytelling efforts to the next level last year with the formation of a new division, called Mattel Creations, in March. The new group was designed to drive content across a variety of platforms for the company's portfolio of brands, including Barbie, "Thomas & Friends" and "Bob the Builder." It will also aim to amplify integrated play experiences on a global scale. ©

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THE CARAT SHOP



JAMES NGO
senior vice president, franchise management, Legendary

TAPPING INTO UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

by **BARBARA SAX**

James Ngo, the newly appointed senior vice president of franchise management at Legendary, wants to extend the film studio's brands beyond consumer products to gaming, live entertainment and more in original and exciting ways. The Burbank, Calif.-based media company, which was acquired by Dalian Wanda Group in January 2016 for \$3.5 billion, has always been strong in consumer products, but Ngo believes its feature films and growing television properties have untapped potential to extend into new categories.

"This is a newly created position at Legendary, so it's exciting to build something from the ground up," says Ngo, who will develop additional revenue opportunities for the studio's IP and oversee the company's brand collaborations on established IP across film, TV, digital, virtual reality and live events. "Legendary has been very focused on extending our properties to consumer products and our existing licensing business already works with well-known players in the industry, such as Jakks Pacific, Funko and all the usual suspects. One of my top priorities will be to define new areas of business that we can get into, and then set up those relationships and partnerships."

Ngo will also focus on brand partnerships and brand integration for all Legendary productions.

"I want to develop a total brand structure that creates an ecosystem for new revenue for the amazing films and television that we are creating," he says.

As vice president of global brand acquisitions and franchise development at FremantleMedia, Ngo managed licensing and branding for shows such as "American

A man with a beard and short dark hair, wearing a Carolina Panthers jersey, stands in a gym. The jersey is black with blue and silver accents, featuring the number 12 and a Super Bowl 50 patch. He is looking off to the side with a serious expression. The background shows gym equipment, including a squat rack with weights.

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Idol,” “America’s Got Talent,” “The X Factor,” “The Price Is Right” and “Family Feud,” and forged relationships with world-class licensees and retailers across all major sectors including toys, fashion and apparel, home, beauty, food, publishing and gaming. Ngo also served as the vice president of licensing and business development at Earthbound Brands, a boutique design and licensing agency based in New York City that specializes in large-scale, direct-to-retail and licensing programs.

“I spent 10 years at FremantleMedia building the North American business for ‘American Idol’ when the show first came to the U.S., and also worked on some of the biggest television shows in the world,” he says. “With very mass-appeal properties like ‘American Idol,’ I’ve done deals anywhere from traditional categories, like games

and toys, to ice cream partnerships with ‘American Idol’ and Nestlé and Dryers Ice Cream, and deals with slot machines and lottery tickets and everything else in between. I’m hoping

that by bringing that kind of a background to Legendary, I can expand on the relationships we have, both in the licensing community and with retailers as well.”

Ngo will make a big push into gaming, which has been an untapped market for Legendary and one that will be a natural extension for films like *Pacific Rim*.

“Moving our IP into the gaming and the virtual reality space is a priority,” he says. “Live entertainment

also makes a lot of sense for entertainment properties, and I’m meeting with key players in that space to see where the opportunities are.

“One thing we won’t do is jump into the same formula that everybody else is doing. New applications would be a technology-driven, live experience where virtual reality plays a main part of that or something more gaming-focused like a league. Rather than a standard activation that’s already been done, we’re interested in applications that are new and different and innovative because that’s very much the spirit of Legendary across all of our businesses.”

While Legendary Pictures is well-developed in the film space, its television business is newly emerging.

“Legendary has made some tremendous progress with some of the shows we’re putting out, both on Netflix and on traditional network television,” Ngo says.

The company is producing “Love,” a series with Judd Apatow on Netflix; is starting production on a new “Lost in Space” with Netflix; is producing “Colony” on USA network; and is launching “Downward Dog” on ABC.

“We have a wide range of content to work with, and it’s all high caliber and high quality,” says Ngo. “Our digital team puts out a lot of content, and we also have Legendary Comics, which produces extensive storylines based on our movies as well as original storylines, so we are in a very good position when it comes to generating new ideas and new IP.”

The challenge will be prioritizing.

“A lot of my attention is now on setting up all the partners for *Pacific Rim 2*. Then we have the ‘Lost in Space’ release in 2018. With its pedigree, its fan base and the commitment Netflix has made to this new version of the show, I think ‘Lost in Space’ will be a runaway hit for us, so we’re really ramping up our efforts on that side of the business,” he says.

Ngo says he’s excited about joining Legendary at a time when the multi-media company has so much in the pipeline.

“I’m so excited about the content side of the business,” he says. “2018 is going to be a big year for us with *Pacific Rim 2* and ‘Lost in Space,’ and in 2019 we have a whole slew of things that will launch including the *Pokémon* movie and the sequel to *Godzilla*, *Godzilla 2*, which we’ll build into a bigger universe. That will be a very fun property to work on since it’s very different from a lot of the superhero movies that are out there right now. We’ve also gotten the rights to the *Dune* franchise, and that is really exciting. The energy around *Dune* is a testament to how big that franchise is going to be; so when you put all that together and see what we have in store for 2018 and beyond from a brand and IP standpoint, it’s very robust with a lot of fun properties to work on.” ©

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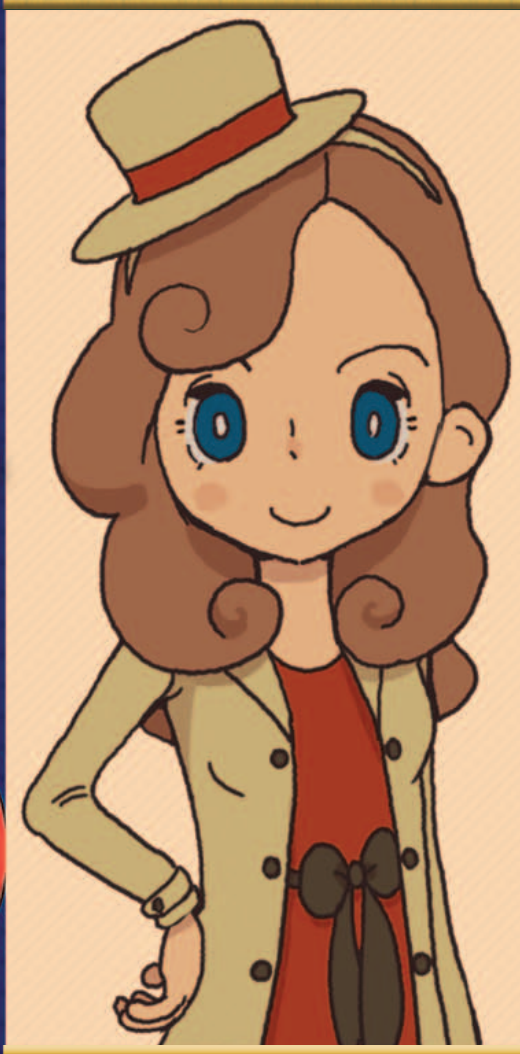
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BRIAN MARIOTTI
CEO, Funko

POP CULTURE PURVEYORS

by **BARBARA SAX**

Funko CEO Brian Mariotti believes the collectibles company is positioned to dominate the pop culture collectibles world.

“Pop culture is booming, and we set out to be the alpha to omega for everything pop culture,” he says. “That starts with licensing, so it’s imperative that we carry more licensed contracts than any company on the planet.”

Whether it’s movies, video games, anime shows or television, when it comes to pop culture, Mariotti wants collectors and retailers to immediately think of Funko. The company, which holds 175 to 200 unique license contracts providing it access to 10,000 individual characters, had triple-digit growth in three out of the last four years and will report around \$425 million in sales for 2016, an excess of 50 percent growth over 2015.

“We expect to be a 500 million dollar company next year, and there’s a blueprint for us to become a billion dollar company in a few years,” he says.

One part of the company’s success equation is the iconic look of its products.

“When we set out to carry a huge catalog of licensing contracts, it was also important that we designed an aesthetic that resonates with all four quadrants: men and women, boys and girls,” says Mariotti. Funko’s whimsical, stylized figures retain the essence and soul of the character, but have a very identifiable Funko look.

“Everything we do is aesthetically driven. We look at ourselves kind of like a LEGO,” he says. Like LEGO, Funko brands (Pop!, Rock Candy, Mystery Minis and Dorbs) have their own look and feel, which it layers over other IPs.

“We’re bringing people into our ecosystem because Funko products are whimsical, fun, affordable and we have a massively different array of products,” he says. “We’re reaching customers we never imagined would be pop culture collectors.”

Over half of Funko’s customers are women, not the typical consumer group for collectibles.

“If we were just an action figure company, we’d be 95 percent male. Aesthetically, we’ve got to come up with things that are different. If you’re a 35-year-old soccer mom who loves ‘Game of Thrones’ and you’re a fan of Daenerys Mother of Dragons, you’re not going to set a Daenerys action figure on your desk with 25 points of articulation that looks just like Daenerys. You’re going to set a Pop! or Mystery Mini on your desk, because it’s whimsical, stylized and fun,” says Mariotti.

The broad array of licenses combined with that aesthetic is

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the company's "secret sauce," according to Mariotti. The company's huge catalog of characters and its ability to identify emerging trends keeps it ahead of the curve.

"We have a flat organization, and we're all paying attention so it's hard to slip something by us. If something is moving the needle, someone is coming to me or our licensing coordinator and sharing it with them," he says. In addition to being on the cutting edge, the company also succeeds in monetizing back catalog licenses from classics such as "Golden Girls," "Seinfeld" and "Friends," to obscure Looney Tunes characters.

"We always make it a point to not just focus on the A-level characters, so we'll make the Barbs of the world," says Mariotti of the "Stranger Things" supporting character. "Funko is never going to be driven by just doing the characters that are going to drive the most dollars. We're going to drive development based on the characters that mean the most to us. We want to represent the brands as best we can, and that doesn't mean cherry picking the main characters and not doing the tertiary characters. Dollars be damned, that's how we're going to do it."

Mariotti believes the company's focus makes the company a valuable retail partner.

"We act as category managers with buyers at key retail partners to keep things timely and relevant, and move the product in and out. Big box retailers like Target and Walmart typically set two times a year. When we go into a Target and Walmart, we're trying to get product in on a weekly basis. When the buyer at Walmart knows that 'Game of Thrones' is coming back on TV or when a new show like 'Westworld' launches, the product is automatically there. We are working hard with retail partners to make sure that content is always refreshing, always relevant and always current, and I think we do that better than anybody else."

Funko recently signed an agreement to acquire Underground Toys Limited, a London-based manufacturer and distributor of licensed product that has been Funko's European product distributor since 2014, expanding the company's presence in that market.

"Over the last two years our relationship with Underground Toys Limited has resulted in an extensive increase in the distribution of our products throughout Europe," says Mariotti. "This transaction will expand upon our already successful relationship and fully unite Funko with the Underground Toys Limited team to support and advance our international growth strategy."

As a company that makes products designed by collectors for collectors, Funko continues to push the envelope on higher-quality design and production while keeping the barrier to entry low for collectors. Funko figures retail for an average price of \$7 to \$8, and the

average Funko collector has between 30 and 50 products.

"Our price points encourage people to have a large collection," Mariotti says. Blind Bag items sell for \$3.99 while Pop! figures retail at \$9.99.

"Our goal is to make as many different forms of Batman, Darth Vader and Belle as we can," he says. "We think there's an appetite for that whether it's in Blind Bags or Dorbz or Pop!. The diversity of design and price point continues to attract a new customer base, so as long as we can find cool and different ways to represent these awesome characters, we'll do it."

Funko's fastest-growing segments are Mystery Minis and Blind Bags. Subscription boxes are also an important part of the business.

"Blind box unboxing videos continue to be important and are very social media driven," says Mariotti. "There's something about blind boxes that is resonating with consumers, regardless of age. It's like baseball cards when collectors are chasing that rare figure. That's where affordability comes into play."

The company is moving into direct-to-consumer programs.

"We're the official subscription box partners with Marvel, *Star Wars*, DC Comics and Disney to design and manufacture all products in those subscription boxes. It's our vision to build a community around this direct-to-consumer relationship around these four key licenses," says Mariotti.

The company also entered apparel with limited-edition t-shirts.

"Consumers traditionally don't care who manufactures licensed

apparel, but Funko can generate brand loyalty by using our own IP, whether its Dorbz or Pop!, to create t-shirts that only Funko can make," he says. Mariotti notes that the company can leverage its 1.5 million-deep social media fan base to create a sense of urgency around limited-edition t-shirts, driving fans to specific retailers.

"That's very different than what traditional licensed apparel companies are doing," he says.

The company has also begun licensing its digital content through an app that allows fans to download, collect and trade Pop! figures on iOS devices.

There are a few licenses he still would like to add to his roster.

"James Bond, Nintendo and Pokémon are highest on our wish list," he says. Meanwhile, Funko will be moving into licensed homewear, apparel and accessories in the next few years.

"These are all categories we believe we can get in to to be a true one-stop shop for pop culture. So through acquisition or building that business, we'll be getting into these categories in the next few years," he says. ©





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Energizing the Evergreens



With several new content initiatives, Cartoon Network Enterprises is poised to offer a broader portfolio and more opportunities in licensing and events.

by TONY LISANTI

With several new multi-platform content initiatives that broaden its portfolio beyond the core boys' demo, Cartoon Network Enterprises is ready for action.

Following a period of redevelopment, CNE, part of Turner, a Time Warner company, is now focused on launching several new licensing initiatives worldwide based on the new series for its iconic "Ben 10" franchise and the relaunch of "PowerPuff Girls," as well as the popularity of its Adult Swim programs, including "Rick and Morty," and various other digital content and apps.

"Four to five years ago we didn't have the well-rounded portfolio that we have today," says Peter Yoder, vice president, Cartoon Network Enterprises, North America. "If you look back at CN and the brands we were pitching to retail, it was very much focused on boys 6 to 11. One of the great things our content team has done is not only look to have a strong core boys' offering, but also looking at programs from Adult Swim, which hits the tween/teen young adult audience, as well as bringing back the 'PowerPuff Girls' brand, which has a strong girl following among the girls that grew up with the brand,

and creating products for them. We now have a much more well-rounded portfolio that includes boys 6 to 11, girls 6 to 11 and tweens, teens and young adults."

As CNE gears up for NY Toy Fair this month, Yoder believes that the licensor's partners are looking at its popular franchises with a fresh perspective, and justifiably so, as new content is driving the development of new products. The underlying message to its partners is simply that CNE is committed to strengthening and growing its evergreen franchises over the long-term.

"The network has done a great job not just saying that we create multi-platform content, but actually doing it," adds Yoder, who has been a member of the CNE team since 2006 and reports to Cartoon Network president Christina Miller. "We are giving our fans true multi-platform experiences, so while we are creating linear content, we are also offering additional content specific for CN apps as well as evaluating how we expand with SVOD opportunities and how we support kids creating their own content."

As Cartoon Network is responding to the changing dynamics of linear television and kids' viewing habits, the network is still delivering strong ratings and viewership,



PETER YODER
vice president, Cartoon Network
Enterprises, North America



which bodes well for its brand licensing group.

CNE is a well-recognized global licensor, ranked No. 30 in the world, according to the Top 150 Global Licensors Report published annually by *License Global*, reporting \$2 billion in retail sales of licensed merchandise worldwide.

While the challenges facing the rapidly changing traditional kids' TV sector have been well-documented, Cartoon Network has several key points of differentiation, including a well-established audience, the ability to promote its shows, development of content across different platforms and strong evergreen properties.

"What the network's new multi-platform strategy affords us is to have content being delivered at all times, and from a CP standpoint that helps us to create content for retail along with other opportunities that we couldn't do before," says Yoder. "It allows us to have newness and be out there all the time and the multi-platform content gives us additional support for a specific character or something else. With 'Ben 10,' for example, it allows us to tell additional stories or background about the alien characters to enrich the story."

Another competitive challenge for the kids' TV sector is the huge audiences, as well as consumer products programs, that the major studios garner with their blockbuster hits.

"Mega theatricals have a key window of opportunity when the film launches and maybe when the DVD comes out, but there's not a lot of support in between or afterwards. What the CN network has been able to do based on our franchise strategy is focus on what is

the three-year, five-year and ten-year vision for these brands and how do we support it across this long-term time frame."

One of Cartoon Network's longstanding franchises, "Ben 10," which first premiered in 2006, has become a sizable consumer products business over the past decade, representing \$4.5 billion in retail sales. And now, with a new series, which has already premiered in more than 149 countries in Asia Pacific and Europe, the Middle East and Africa beginning last October, the new superhero kids' show gets set for its U.S. debut this spring.

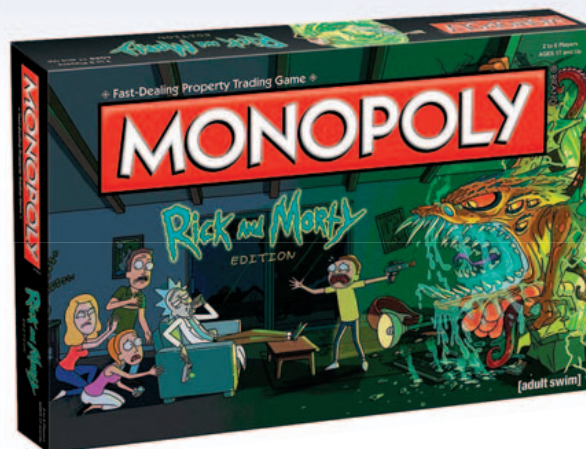
"We have big expectations for 'Ben 10,' especially based on the early results of its global launch," says Yoder. "We are well-positioned for success."

According to Cartoon Network, the series currently ranks as one of the top 10 shows in the U.K. among kids 4 to 15, one of the top three shows in Poland among boys 4 to 9 and one of the top 10 shows in Romania among boys 4 to 9. "Ben 10" premieres in Malaysia are No. 1 in their timeslot among kids and boys 4 to 14, and rank No. 1 in Australia with boys 5 to 12.

With the newest reiteration on "Ben 10," Cartoon Network expects to attract a new generation of fans with the high-energy fantasy show that introduces reimagined characters and 10 aliens.

The series is produced by





Cartoon Network Studios, created and executive produced by Man of Action Entertainment (*Big Hero 6*, “Generator Rex”), with John Fang (“Mixels,” “Generator Rex”) as supervising producer.

“We really have focused on what kids loved the most about the franchise and highlighted the things that every kid could identify with from the 10 aliens to Ben’s persona as a 10-year-old who isn’t perfect nor a typical superhero from another world, but simply a normal kid who is fallable and funny,” explains Yoder, who believes that master toy partner Playmates has captured the fun, excitement and action of the show and translated it into a powerful new toy line.

According to Yoder, the Playmates collection, consisting of 10 SKUs, will launch this fall at retail with secondary categories and full apparel lines hitting

retail in spring 2018 followed by a full line of back-to-school products. In addition, Penguin, master partner for publishing, will launch its books this year as well.

Cartoon Network recently introduced a new mobile game, “Ben 10: Up to Speed,” with a selection of five alien forms and 60 levels, with new aliens and levels to be added regularly based on the TV series.

With the relaunch of the “PowerPuff Girls,” the series gives CNE the ability to target the girls’ market and better balance and expand its portfolio. According to Yoder, the Spin Master toy line and play sets, which are launching in the spring, enable girls to have a more immersive experience with the property.

The popularity of the franchise continues to grow as evidenced by the recent pop-up shop that was created last November to launch a new version of the “PowerPuff Yourself” app, which allows users to customize an avatar based on what they would look like as a citizen of Townsville. “It gave fans the ability to explore and define what makes them successful and unique,” Yoder says.

One example of Cartoon Network’s multi-platform content initiatives is “MagiMobile,” an immersive app recently launched that expands the universe of the original “Mighty Magiswords” series.

According to Yoder, a consumer products strategy is being development for release in 2018.

Another example of what Yoder described as CN’s strategy to expand its portfolio beyond the core boys’ category is “Rick and Morty,” the top performing original series on Adult Swim.

With a new master toy partner being announced at NY Toy Fair, Yoder is excited about the growth opportunities in consumer products beyond collectibles and games for the series based on a “sociopathic genius scientist” now going into its third season.

Key licensee partners include J!nx, Funko, Cryptozoic Entertainment, USAopoly, PhatMojo and Astro Gaming, and Yoder says CNE will continue to expand the consumer products program.

With a broader portfolio and new content versus one singular line as well as key master toy partners—Spin Master, Playmates and Funko—Yoder says there are more opportunities and a lot of excitement building for CNE.

Beginning this month at NY Toy Fair, CNE is energized and ready for action into 2018 and beyond. ©



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A LICENSE TO

Relax

CEO Doug Wood examines the strategy and value of licensing that have helped drive the growth and expansion of this popular lifestyle brand.

by TONY LISANTI

Imagine that you are comfortably sitting on the most incredible beach surrounded by the island spirit and culture, staring at a brilliantly clear blue sky, a pristine surf and soft crystal sand. You are holding a cool, refreshing branded beverage sitting in a licensed beach chair and dressed in a cool, stylish outfit that feels like it was custom made.

Imagine also that you can even escape the hustle and bustle for a few hours and experience this scenario on Fifth Avenue in midtown New York at one of this company's popular restaurant and retail complexes that captures the essence of island life.

It can all be summed up in one word "Relax," and as its tagline states, "Make Life One Long Weekend."

This is the world and persona that emanates from Tommy Bahama, one of the most notable and established island-influenced aspirational lifestyle brands in the world that creates what every person wants—the opportunity to escape and enjoy a carefree world of fun and relaxation.

From its extensive collections of

men's and women's fashion to its first successful brand extension in furniture, the business of brand licensing has had a decided impact on the business of Tommy Bahama. From its own retail stores to traditional upscale department stores including Nordstrom, Dillard's and Macy's to wholesale club Costco, the Tommy Bahama brand has stayed true to its original founders' vision and the fictional character they created, while expanding into a major upscale lifestyle brand that resonates with consumers around the globe.

Tommy Bahama was founded in 1992 by three entrepreneurs from the apparel industry with a fascination for the beach life. In 2003, the company was acquired by Oxford Industries, and remains a wholly owned subsidiary of the international apparel manufacturer, which is based in Atlanta, Ga., while Tommy Bahama maintains its headquarters in Seattle, Wash. Tommy Bahama is the largest of Oxford's operating groups, which also include Lilly Pulitzer, Lanier Clothes, Southern Tide and Oxford. The brand reported



DOUG WOOD
chief executive officer, Tommy Bahama

net sales of \$658 million in fiscal 2015, an increase of more than \$100 million from fiscal 2013.

Today, as Tommy Bahama marks its 25th anniversary this year, the brand is as popular as ever. Under the leadership of chief executive officer Doug Wood, the company continues to expand internationally, develop new products and partnerships, broaden its customer base, focus on quality and embrace licensing as a growth business.

According to the Top 150 Global Licenseors Report, published annually by *License Global*, Tommy Bahama ranks No. 82, reporting \$342 million in retail sales of licensed products worldwide in 2015.

"Tommy Bahama wouldn't be where it is today without licensed products, but this strategy requires a lot of work to execute," says Wood, who has directly influenced the company's growth and transition from a wholesale-centric company into a direct-to-consumer business with a strong wholesale division. He joined Tommy Bahama in 2001 as chief operating officer, became president in 2008 and assumed his current role in 2015. "It's got to go beyond men's and women's apparel; you need to keep layering on products, but it's tricky, and do it with different categories and points of distribution.

"There are many lifestyle brands that act like they have all the elements, but look at all the products that Tommy Bahama brings to market," Wood adds. "If you want to live the island life, we have the products that will bring that experience to you. And they are not hobbies, they are real businesses."

What began as an apparel brand that established a niche among older guys that fancied a cool and comfortable beach look, has expanded not only its target demographics and fashion collections into footwear, accessories and fragrances, but has also expanded into other businesses including indoor and outdoor furniture, home décor, beach chairs and accessories, sports, giftware, restaurants and retail. The company now operates 168 retail stores in the U.S., Australia, Tokyo and Hong Kong, 16 of which also have restaurants.





Among some of brand's recent licensing partnerships that reflect Wood's strategy to broaden its reach and expand into new categories include the following:

■ **Sports.** Tommy Bahama recently signed PGA Tour player Ricky Barnes to an exclusive multi-year wardrobe agreement. Barnes will wear Tommy Bahama apparel including polos, woven shirts, knits, outerwear and performance golf pants while playing on the PGA Tour. The brand's new IslandZone collection features a new technical fabric that regulates body temperature.

"Tommy Bahama has been involved in golf for years and we're excited to now partner with Barnes," says Wood. "Ricky has a great sense of style, and with the launch of IslandZone, our new performance apparel that Ricky will be wearing, the timing couldn't be better. His passion for golf and relaxed personality makes Ricky a great brand ambassador."

Another new apparel partnership is with the NCAA, which will launch with around 18 teams and feature a trimmer fit.

In addition, Tommy Bahama has longstanding partnerships with Major League Baseball and the National Football League.

■ **Eyewear.** Tommy Bahama is launching a co-branded sunglass collection with Maui Jim this spring, which Wood believes will be a strong addition to the product line. Says Wood, "We are two companies that have the same view and look at the world the same way."

■ **Handbags.** Tommy Bahama recently partnered with Showroom35 for a new line of handbags, which are now hitting retail.

"On the positive side, when you sign a new licensee you have a hope that they are going to put a lot into the brand. When I first walked into the Tommy Bahama handbag showroom, it blew me away," says Wood. "When you partner with someone who so gets the brand and so delivers through products in a category that I have never been happy with what we have done, you know this is going to work and this

is the opportunity we have been trying to achieve and our partner understands us."

■ Another notable partnership includes a collaboration with Airstream for a special-edition 28-foot travel trailer and touring coach.

One of Tommy Bahama's first and now most important licensees was Lexington Home Brands, which has expanded into several hundred products in home and outdoor furniture that capture the essence of resort living.

"They have been able to grow this business, and that's something we couldn't do. They are a partner that understands the brand, and where to place it," Wood says. "We always try to find licensees that fit with the brand and have the distribution beyond our doors to attract new customers. It's a great revenue stream and it influences perceptions about the brand."

According to Wood, the furniture business is a \$100 million dollar business and the restaurant business is an \$80 million dollar business "and we have just begun to expand this business," he says.

"Everyone has a good idea of how to make money with your brand, but we only have one brand. So every day we focus on the fact that it's all about the brand, because otherwise, if we don't, we go home," says Wood. "Licensing is tricky that way, and that's why we closely evaluate each partnership and always ask 'does that make sense for us?'"

One of the categories that Wood wasn't so sure made sense for the brand was beach chairs. Whether you are on a beach in Hawaii, California or the New Jersey shore, one of the company's most surprising licensing initiatives—Tommy Bahama-branded beach chairs and umbrellas from Costco—will be on display. It's also one of the brand extensions that Wood admits he lost a lot of sleep over; yet the line, along with other beach accessories, has become a big success and important part of the brand's product mix. Wood realized that the Tommy Bahama customer also shopped at Costco and so he took a chance, realizing: where else at retail would his customers buy Tommy Bahama beach chairs?



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One category that didn't pan out so well for the company was its entry into spirits with an upscale rum, but Wood says he may possibly take another shot.

"We had a rum license about 10 years ago, and we felt strongly about it. There was extensive marketing and research for a premium rum from the same company (Sidney Frank) that launched a premium vodka, Grey Goose. They positioned it perfectly, spent a ton of money, but it didn't work. It was a huge surprise, as we also put a lot of effort behind it," Wood recalls.

"But I still believe that there is an opportunity in spirits, and it's something that we are always looking at," he adds. "Maybe it's not even a liquor, but maybe a mix, which is something that would resonate with our customers because they know our drinks."

Looking ahead to 2017, Wood sees significant opportunities in food and beverage licensing, restaurants and retail, and other new categories such as eyewear, outerwear and its new college sports line that will unveil a new trimmer fit targeted to a younger demographic.

"I am super excited that our businesses are working, and when I look at licensing and where we are and where we don't have anything, I am starting to reimagine the brand around food and all the different extensions that either food or beverage can do for the brand."

Wood says that the company actually sells a lot of food products in its stores around the holidays, and it fits strategically considering the restaurants. "Tommy Bahama barbecue sauce and seasoning mix, for example, and things that don't dilute the brand, but also gets us into new areas."

Another new concept that offers great potential for expansion

is the Marlin Bar at Tommy Bahama, which opened last November at the Coconut Point mall in Fort Meyers, Fla. While it's not a full-service restaurant, rather more fast casual, Wood describes it as a "retail store with one side cut off so that one wall is an indoor/outdoor bar."

"Our business exploded, and it completely changed the energy at our end of the mall, because we are drawing traffic. It differentiates us and brings people in," Wood says. "If you can put restaurants and retail together, there's a guest that keeps coming back, and you can keep showing them new products."

"People are going out to shop less, but going out to eat and drink more," adds Wood. "We are going to meld those aspects together and make that much more of an experience."

Another new category that may seem contrary to the Tommy Bahama concept is outerwear, which will launch in the fall.

"We have done some outerwear in our own retail stores to fill out the collection. Tommy Bahama and heavy outerwear don't seem to go together, but we will see how it works. We have had some success in Japan, and we will apply what we learned to the launch," Wood says. "We tend to put limits on the brand that our customers don't."

With two strong markets in Japan and Australia, the company plans to open stores in Shanghai next year, and Wood is looking for licensees in other countries as well.

While "relax" may be the key message and one of Tommy Bahama's favorite words, Wood is not relaxing quite yet, as his favorite word may be growth. He's pushing hard to expand the venerable brand into new categories, new restaurants, new markets and new audiences. ©



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FASHION

Hits

Blockbuster movies and hit TV shows will prove to be MAGICal this spring as entertainment franchises inspire fashion collaborations. **by BARBARA SAX**

Entertainment is always an inspiration for fashion collaborations and upcoming blockbuster movies and hit television properties will be the source for new and innovative team ups this year at MAGIC, taking place Feb. 21–23 in Las Vegas, Nev.

Upcoming theatrical releases will provide a platform for supportive cross-category apparel, activewear and accessories. Disney will look for partners at MAGIC that can extend its Marvel IPs, including Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol.2*, into new territories. "There has been a tremendous level of growth and interest from apparel brands, most notably in the women's performance and activewear categories," says Paul Gitter, senior vice president of licensing, Marvel, at Disney Consumer Products and Interactive Media.

Disney broadened the appeal of its Marvel IP among Millennial females when it teamed with fangirl fashion company Her Universe for a first-of-its-kind activewear capsule collection inspired by Marvel's *Captain America: Civil War*. The Marvel Her Universe collection, which debuted at Kohl's, featured looks based on Black Widow, Iron Man and Captain America. *Avengers: Infinity War* is in the wings for a 2018 release.

Disney will also be looking for new opportunities to extend its multi-billion dollar *Star Wars* brand, which will have a new major film release each year through 2020. Last year, Disney launched innovative apparel collaborations tied to *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*. Disney teamed up with Target for Force 4 Fashion, a fashion-meets-fundraising initiative inspired by the





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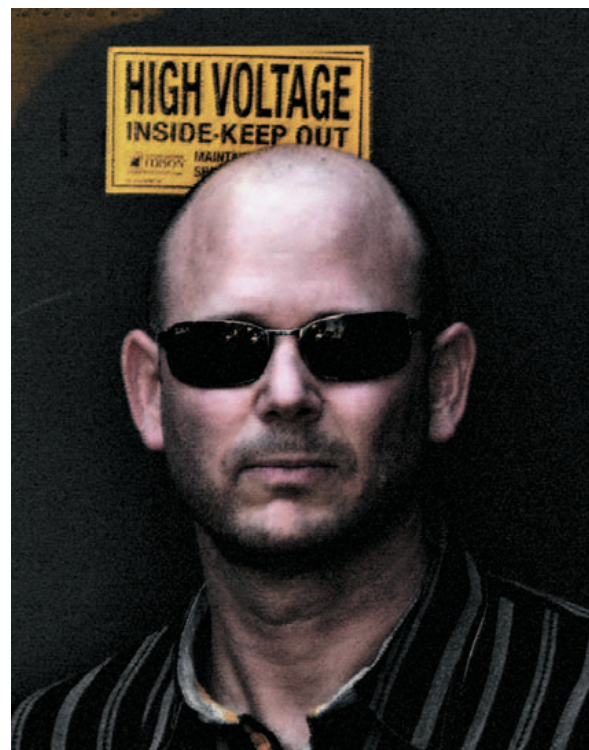
themes of rebellion from the movie. Disney also took *Rogue One* high end with a limited-edition collection of jackets from Columbia Sportswear inspired by characters in the film that retail from \$450 to \$500.

Sony Pictures and Marvel Studios will be showcasing *Spider-Man: Homecoming*, set for a summer 2017 release, and Universal Pictures will be focusing on the fourth film in the enduring favorite *Despicable Me* franchise, *Despicable Me 3*, and *Jurassic World 2*, set for a summer 2018 release.

E. L. James' steamy blockbuster saga *Fifty Shades* will be a hot property at MAGIC with two new installments of the series, *Fifty Shades Darker* and *Fifty Shades Freed*, due in theaters in 2017 and 2018. Caroline Mickler, the U.K. licensing agent for James' *Fifty Shades* trilogy, teamed with Coco de Mer to launch a lingerie collection inspired by the series in advance of the release of *Fifty Shades Darker*.

Striker Entertainment, the licensing agent for edgier film and television IPs, such as the French science fiction action film *Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets*, is looking for innovative partners for the films and television shows it represents. The company recently signed a deal with Intimo for a line of "Five Nights at Freddy's" children's pajamas and will sign new partners for "Five Nights at Freddy's: Sister Location," the new version of its hit video game.

"We're looking for innovative partners who are not just doing the same things," says Marc Mostman, partner at Striker Entertainment. Mostman says Striker will be looking to collaborate on a sneaker collection and creative fashion ranges. "We're looking to create more collaborative fashion collections



like the one we did for 'Orphan Black' with Hot Topic," he says.

Lately television has been a hotbed of inspiration for apparel licensing. "The entertainment industry has been making a transformational shift into lifestyle licensing," says Peter Leeb, vice president, global brand management and strategy, Twentieth Century Fox Consumer Products.

Fox hit a lifestyle licensing home run for "Empire" when it partnered with large-scale and niche luxury brands for a multi-platform, in-store and online collection. The collection featured product from luxury fashion brands such as Alexis Bittar, Cushnie et Ochs and Jimmy Choo, and was sold at Saks Fifth Avenue. Fox also teamed up with fashion label Hood By Air for a streetwear collection.

"That was an unconventional approach, and those are the types of opportunities we'll look for at MAGIC this year," says Leeb. Fox will also try to replicate the success of that program with new partnerships for its new musical drama "Star."

"We're taking a holistic approach to our network so everything we do is a marketing extension to our various IPs," says Leeb. "The goal is to build long-term, sustainable brands in a complicated market, and we're looking for new ways of approaching the business with partners who are breaking away from the clutter."



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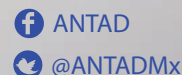
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Leeb said Fox will also be looking for partners for “Bob’s Burgers,” a show that has a loyal fan base, as well as for its evergreen “The Simpsons” and “Zorn,” the studio’s new first-ever animated/live-action blend.

The small screen has become a much larger force in the industry as Netflix and Amazon have produced pop-culture hits like “Stranger Things.” Netflix has partnered with retailers Hot Topic and BoxLunch for a line of “Stranger Things” apparel, featuring t-shirts, raglans and tanks as well as Eleven’s pink dress, exclusively available at Hot Topic. With season two debuting in summer 2017, the IP will be on consumers’ minds.

New properties are always a big part of MAGIC. Nickelodeon recently signed a partnership with JoJo Siwa, the breakout star from “Dance Moms” and will be looking for partners across categories. “Jo-Jo has a social media following like no other and has a retail presence at Claire’s,” says Julie McKenzie, senior vice president of consumer products, Nickelodeon. “We have product shipping in March, and we’re really excited about that. The tween market has been quiet for a while, and we believe this could be the next big thing.”

Striker is also representing the edgy and irreverent animated series “Mr. Pickles” for the first time at MAGIC, where its licensing

partner Changes will be showcasing a line of “Mr. Pickles” t-shirts, hoodies and sweatshirts.

New brands won’t be the only hot IPs at MAGIC this year. The neo-’90s revival is going strong, and Nickelodeon and Fox are riding the nostalgia wave with licensed apparel lines. “The ’90s are having such a moment,” says McKenzie. “Millennials grew up on Nickelodeon. We were the first TV network designed for kids, and they love interacting with the brands they loved as kids.”

Nickelodeon’s partnerships with designer Jeremy Scott, Manhattan-based specialty retailer Story and streetwear brand Kith reached the adult and kid markets. “We’re learning more about the passion and the bandwidth for our ’90s properties as we do more of these retail collaborations,” says McKenzie.

The return of “The X Files” and plans for the 20th anniversary of “Buffy The Vampire Slayer” in 2017 are Fox’s neo-’90s plays. ©



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TOP BRANDS TO DOMINATE TOY FAIR

This year's toy fair season will culminate in New York City with a remarkable lineup of blockbuster toys from the world's largest licensors and licensees. **by ERICA GARBER**

Toy fair season is here once again, and as it heads into the final stretch with New York's International Toy Fair, Feb. 18-21, *License Global* has rounded up a number of the newest toys that are sure to fly off the shelves throughout 2017.

Toy fair season launched Jan. 9 in Hong Kong at the Hong Kong Toys & Games Fair. The U.K.'s annual event, The Toy Fair, hosted by the British Toy and Hobby Association, kicked off Jan. 24, followed by Nuremberg Toy Fair, Feb. 1-6. The shows will culminate with the Toy Industry Association's New York show, which is set to showcase companies from 30 countries and more than 100 first-time exhibitors.

According to retail sales data from The NPD Group, U.S. toy sales grew by 6 percent from January through September 2016, and for the entire year NPD estimated toy sales would be up approximately 6.5 percent. In addition, popular toy categories like collectibles, action figures, and games and puzzles all posted year-over-year growth through September and are on track to continue to flourish throughout the year.

So, what hot trends can you anticipate to see in the toy sector this year? Well, in addition to an array of new products spanning collectibles to play sets, you can also expect to see a raft of hit properties, both classic and new.

First, the Walt Disney Company is entering NY Toy

Fair with a robust lineup of film and television brands—including *Beauty and the Beast*, Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2*, *Thor: Ragnarok*, *Spider-Man: Homecoming*, *Cars 3*, *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, Marvel's *Avengers*, Disney Princess, Disney Classics, "Elena of Avalor," "Tangled the Series," "Doc McStuffins" and "Mickey Roadster Racers."

Highlights from Disney's extensive lineup include *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2*, which will see the addition of action figures as well as more interactive toys based on the film. The leading ladies of the Marvel Universe will also continue to be front and center within the action portfolio as well.

Other highlights from this year's roster include "Tangled the Series," which is set to debut this March and will feature toys based on key elements of Rapunzel's life, including art, adventure and, of course, her hair. New products inspired by the series are slated to launch later this fall. "Elena of Avalor" will also see a swath of new toys in a variety of categories such as music.

In the *Star Wars* universe, Disney is set to launch a series of new toys and collectibles featuring favorite characters such as Rey and BB-8. Finally, *Cars 3* will bring its popular characters back to life with both innovative and traditional play products.

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Overall, Disney will add an array of interactive toys, collectibles, play sets, action figures and dolls, role play items and more to all of its key properties this year, and as the world's No. 1 licensor (according to *License Global's* Top 150 Global Licensors report), the company's extensive toy lines are sure to fly off the shelves this year.

NBCUniversal is heading into the event with several new movies and television programs—including *Despicable Me 3*, *The Fate of the Furious*, “Spirit Riding Free” and “Voltron Legendary Defender.”

For *Despicable Me 3*, the entertainment giant plans to unveil all-new toy categories as well as an extensive multi-category program, which will be supported by partners like Hasbro, Thinkway, WowWee, Ty, Moose and Mega Bloks, among many others. The new ranges will include new collectibles, construction sets, specialty items, innovation products and more.

Furthermore, *The Fate of the Furious* toy program will be anchored by the franchise's global master toy licensee Mattel, which will introduce *Fast & Furious* Basic Stunt Stars and marks the first time that the franchise's characters will be incorporated into vehicle play. Mattel is also set to debut a feature RC: the *Fast & Furious* Dom's Turn & Burn Dodge Charger. The toy program will also be supported by a series of other licensees, including Jada Toys for collectible die-cast vehicles.

On the TV front of NBCUniversal's offerings, the upcoming Netflix original series “Spirit Riding Free” from DreamWorks Animation will feature a toy program supported by master toy licensee Just Play, specialty partner Breyer and more; meanwhile, Playmates will continue as the master toy licensee for “Voltron Legendary Defender.”

NBCUniversal will also be showcasing a special preview of Hasbro's 2017 *Trolls* collection as well as

a sneak peek at a select and curated program for Universal Pictures' *The Mummy*, which is set to hit theaters this June.

Additionally, the company has tapped Playmobil to launch two new play sets based on DreamWorks Animation's *How to Train Your Dragon* franchise. The first set will feature the film's main characters Hiccup and Toothless and includes a blue fire dart, flame sword, helmet and other accessories, allowing kids to help the heroic duo protect the village of Berk and its dragon friends. The second play set will feature Astrid and Stormfly, and includes a saddle



and battle axe.

Playmobil has also partnered with Sony Pictures

Consumer Products for a line of play sets inspired by the latest *Ghostbusters* movie. The first set, the *Ghostbusters* Firehouse, features a number of accessories. The partnership also marks Playmobil's first foray into licensed play sets.

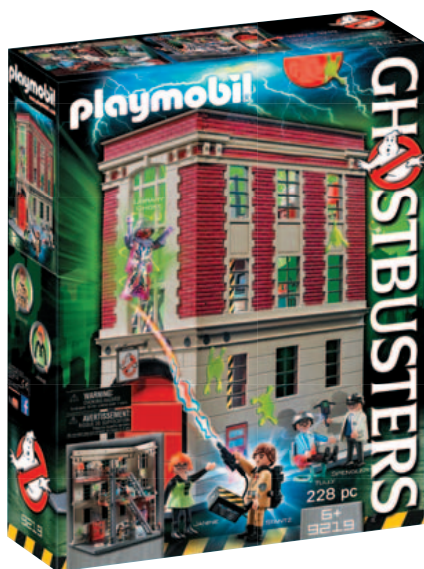
Warner Bros. Consumer Products also has a number of offerings planned for this year's toy fair season, including programs for *Wonder Woman*, *Justice League*, “DC Super Hero Girls,” “Teen Titans Go!” and *The LEGO Batman Movie*. New products in its arsenal include collectibles, dolls, play sets, action figures, costumes and more. Read more about WBCP's new heroic toys on page 68.

Last year, German manufacturer Schleich partnered with Marvel for a diorama series that features a series of hand-painted characters, and the company's North American division is set to highlight the new products at this year's NY Toy Fair with Spider-Man, Hulk, Captain America, Black Widow, Venom, Falcon, Iron Man, Green Goblin, Thor and Doctor Strange.

Schleich will also debut diorama figures featuring DC Comics' Hawkman and Catwoman, among others.

Hasbro is set to unveil a series of toys for both its in-house brands—including My Little Pony, Transformers, Nerf, Littlest Pet Shop, Play-Doh and Monopoly—as well as licensed properties such as Marvel, *Star Wars* and Disney Princess.

Kicking off Hasbro's lineup is “Hanazuki,” its newest entertainment “franchise-brand-in-the-making.” “Hanazuki” is Hasbro's first-ever animated digital series and premiered on YouTube and the “YouTube Kids” app last month. The brand will be supported by a robust toy line—which will launch at select retailers in June and globally in August—that features more than 175 collectible treasures and figures, plush items and a Bluetooth-enabled and app-connected wearable.



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Meanwhile, heritage brands like My Little Pony and Transformers will continue to solidify their places in pop culture with the debut of *Transformers: The Last Knight* in June and *My Little Pony: The Movie* in October alongside robust product lines.

Additionally, Hasbro has signed on to expand its licensed toy offerings for upcoming Marvel, Disney and *Star Wars* films with role play items, play sets and figures, allowing fans to recreate their favorite scenes and bring the film's iconic characters to life.

Finally, the toy company will utilize the Nerf brand to introduce a new active play experience with the Nerf Nitro stunt car blaster. The Nerf Nitro line of launchable foam vehicles and blasters are set to debut with more than 40 vehicles to collect and play with, customizable stunt sets and accessories.

Hatchimals creator Spin Master also has big things in store for this year's event, including a wide range of products across multiple categories—some of which will feature new developments in robotics, STEM-based products and toys “grounded in classic play patterns.” From legacy brands to new product launches, Spin Master's NY Toy Fair lineup includes Air Hogs, Meccano, Zoomer, Hatchimals, Luvabella, Rube Goldberg, Etch-A-Sketch, “Paw Patrol,” “Rusty Rivets” and Kinetic Sand. In the games category, this includes Wobbly Worm, Hedbanz and Soggy Doggy.

Key lines the company has planned for 2017 comprise the *Pirates of the Caribbean* Silent Mary Pirate Ship play set, “Masha and the Bear” Snap N Fashion, “The Powerpuff Girls” Ultimate Story Maker and the “Teletubbies” Dancing Po.

Spin Master will also expand on its Hatchimals line with the launch of Hatchimals Colleggtibles. This 72-piece collection will reveal the gender of the creature waiting to be hatched when the egg is warmed by a child's touch and is set to launch this fall. Spin Master will also announce new Hatchimals licensing partnerships in the coming year.

Other developments to the company's roster include a “Paw Patrol” Sea Patroller and “Paw Patrol” Mission Cruiser as well as a “Rusty Rivets” Botasaur and the “Rusty Rivets” Rivets Lab play set, both based on the new animated series.

Additionally, Spin Master will unveil a new brand, called Luvabella. The new toy is a “modern evolution”





of the classic baby doll and will combine nurturing play with advanced robotics such as life-like sculpting, facial expressions, sounds and more.

Discovery Consumer Products is heading into NY Toy Fair with new products from an array of partners for both the Discovery and Animal Planet brands.

Delving further into products spanning the ocean, land, monsters and dinosaur themes, Animal Planet has partnered with licensees such as MasterPieces Puzzle Company, SCS Direct and Wild Republic.

MasterPieces has signed on to add new animal and wildlife images to its puzzle line. New puzzle images will include jungle life, ocean life, forest life and safari life themes in addition to focuses on specific animals such as giraffes, cheetahs, peacocks, lions and more.

At NY Toy Fair, SCS Direct will spotlight its line of Animal Planet Hatch 'Em Eggs, which feature dinosaurs, safari, rainforest and sea creatures.

Wild Republic will also continue to develop its line of Animal Planet plush with a slate of new designs set for 2017. The company also provides Discovery's Shark Week plush offering based on the annual summer event.

For the Discovery brand (formerly Discovery Kids) licensees including Horizon Group USA, Sakar, The Bridge Direct and Merchsource will display "smart fun" products including science activity kits based on weather and chemical reactions; youth electronic products such as a waterproof speaker and camera; and reel packets for Mattel's View-Master retro toy.

The Discovery brand will also continue to expand this year and is currently seeking partners for ride-ons, board games, card games, outdoor, sporting goods and preschool toys.

The television presence at NY Toy Fair doesn't stop

with Discovery's programs. Entertainment One will unveil a wide array of partners and collections for its preschool series "Peppa Pig" and "PJ Masks."

Kicking off eOne's toy program for "Peppa Pig" is Cardinal with the "Peppa Pig" Play Cards super set, which features three jumbo playing card decks featuring characters from the television program. Wonder Forge will also showcase a branded matching game and TCG is on board to highlight "Peppa Pig" Tumble and Spin, a new electronic music match memory game.

Meanwhile, Kent International will debut a themed bicycle, complete with character graphics and a Peppa-shaped handlebar bag. Kidz Toys will also showcase a four-piece wood-crafted musical set that includes a tambourine, xylophone and striker, slide whistle and clacker in the shape of Peppa's head. Jazwares is also set to unveil a new extension of Princess Peppa-themed items, such as a castle and a carriage.

Beyond "Peppa Pig," eOne has also secured a wide array of new partners for its popular series "PJ Masks"—including First Act for a ukulele; Little Kids for a bubble machine; Playhut for vehicle toys; Swimways for a swim vest; and What Kids Want for a branded bowling set.

Jazwares will also head into New York's International Toy Fair with a swath of toys for brands including "Chuggington," "Hey Duggee," "Molang," "Roblox,"

"Assassin's Creed" and many more. The company will also expand its lines for "Animal Jam," "Minecraft" and "RWBY."

This year, almost all of Jazwares' ranges will expand through a variety of action figures, vehicles, role play items, play sets, blind bag collectibles, plush with sounds and more. The toy company will also relaunch First Act, a musical instruments brand for kids. ©



PLAY IT

10 Video Games to Watch

This exclusive report highlights 10 upcoming video games that are sure to inspire a host of new toys and collectibles for fans of all ages.

by **ERICA GARBER**

"Roblox"

Following its initial debut in 2006, this user-generated social gaming platform continues to strive forward with launches on Xbox One and the virtual reality platform Oculus Rift last year, and, most recently, its appointment of Jazwares to bring its universe offline with an all-new toy line.

The new toy collection—which includes a selection of play sets, figures and more—is based on some of the most popular games and characters from "Roblox's" user-generated universe and will allow consumers to mix and match parts to create new characters, just like they can online.

The first series of toys is slated to debut at top retailers across North America this month and will pave the way for a host of new toy products inspired by the social gaming platform.



"Yooka-Laylee"

Set to debut April 11, this open-world 3D platformer from U.K.-based Playtonic Games will allow users to tackle a variety of puzzles and challenges as Yooka and Laylee in their search for Pagies, the golden bounty used to unlock new worlds, each complete with characters, bosses, additional challenges, arcade games, quiz shows, multi-player games and more.

"Yooka-Laylee" was funded via Kickstarter with more

than 73,000 backers and blew past its £175,000 goal, bringing in £2,090,104 in funding, making it both a viral hit and one that is sure to garner a huge fan base.

"Super Mario Odyssey"

Nintendo has unveiled a raft of new games that will be available on its new Switch platform this year, including the seventh 3D platform title in the main "Super Mario" series.

The new game, "Super Mario Odyssey," will place users into the role of Mario as he travels across a variety of new lands beyond the Mushroom Kingdom, including destinations inspired by real-world locations.

Set to be released during the holiday season, the upcoming Mario game will likely set in motion a host of new collectibles, plush toys, figurines and more as the classic character discovers new abilities, characters and more.

"Splatoon 2"

Another addition to the expansive Nintendo portfolio this year is "Splatoon 2." The new team-based third-person shooter will feature new characters, weapons and more. The game will also continue to feature its turf war battles and the squid-like Inklings.

With new characters and weapons, the game opens itself up for new toys licensees for products such as figurines, plush, keychains, water guns and more.

"South Park: The Fractured But Whole"

Set to launch in Q1 of this year, Ubisoft's "South Park: The Fractured But Whole" will serve as the sequel to the television series' first video game "South Park: The Stick of Truth" and will allow players to become a role-playing superhero for either Freedom Pals or Coon and Friends.

Although the television series, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, is basis enough for its own



AGAIN

line of toys and collectibles, Ubisoft has already launch four exclusive figurines inspired by the video game and more figurines will surely follow throughout 2017.



"Animal Jam"

"Animal Jam," which launched in 2010 as a free-to-play game for kids ages 6 to 12, is a web-based game and social network in the U.S. The game boasts more than 70 million registered users and unveiled a raft of new licensees last year, including Jazwares as its master toy partner.



In addition to Jazwares' range of figures, play sets and plush toys, the web-based game has also tapped TCG Toys for board games and puzzles; CJ Products for pillow pets; and Identity Toys for a branded Find It game.

With a robust lineup of toys licensees under its belt, "Animal Jam" is likely to continue its worldwide expansion with more partners and merchandise as the year continues.

"Halo Wars 2"

Published by Microsoft Studios, "Halo Wars 2" is set to be released for the Xbox One and PCs this month. The new real-time strategy game will serve as the sequel to the 2009 video game "Halo Wars" and will join the classic "Halo" franchise, which originally launched in 2001.

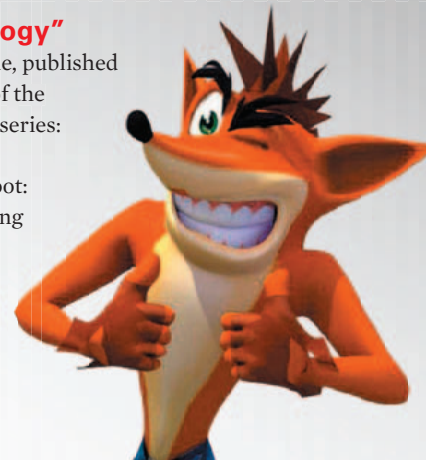
Additionally, "Halo Wars 2" will feature a new alien faction, known as the Banished, who will serve as a replacement for the Covenant.

As with previous "Halo" games, there is sure to be a large toy push in categories such as collectibles, action figures and more.

"Crash Bandicoot N-Sane Trilogy"

This upcoming platformer video game, published by Activision, is a collection of remakes of the first three games in the Crash Bandicoot series: "Crash Bandicoot," "Crash Bandicoot 2: Cortex Strikes Back" and "Crash Bandicoot: Warped." The character, who is celebrating his 20th anniversary this year, will also be featured in Activision's upcoming "Skylanders Imaginators."

In addition to a new toy that will be released with "Skylanders Imaginators," the remastered series will certainly inspire a raft of toys and collectibles given its nostalgic nature.



"The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild"

As one of the first games announced for Nintendo's new video game platform Switch, "The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild" will enable players to see what has become of the kingdom of Hyrule after the protagonist Link awakens from a 100-year slumber.

As the 19th installment in "The Legend of Zelda" series, new toy lines will likely build on the franchise's storied past, but will also feature new designs based off Link's new blue wardrobe, new characters and more.

"Destiny 2"

Riding on the heels of the launch of "Destiny: Rise of the Iron" in late 2016, Bungie has confirmed that the original "Destiny" game will receive a sequel this year; however, very little is known about the game beyond that.

Despite the lack of details, the original "Destiny" franchise saw deals spanning action figures, figurines and more, and the new first-person shooter game is sure to follow suit with a new generation of fans. ©

WBCP'S

Warner Bros. Consumer Products is planning a superhero takeover for both screens and retail shelves in 2017. **by ANDREW CORSELLI**

WBBCP is poised for a heroic 2017 with a slate of new products and content for its key superhero brands.

Highlighted by DC franchises including *Wonder Woman*, *The LEGO Batman Movie* and *Justice League*, and “DC Super Hero Girls,” “Justice League Action” and “Teen Titans Go!,” WBCP will be well-represented at NY Toy Fair this month. The company will feature toys, collectibles and costumes, among other goodies this year.

Wonder Woman once said, “there are times when faith is all we have to rely upon,” but 2017 will not be one of those moments for the iconic superhero, who is poised to have a big year. In fact, she will hit theaters worldwide June 2 for her first standalone, self-titled feature film. *Wonder Woman* delves into the superhero’s history and her fight to cease all wars.

Continuing on the celebration of Wonder Woman’s 75th anniversary in 2016, and in support of the upcoming movie, WBCP and DC Entertainment have collaborated for a product line from global master toy licensee Mattel that will feature

collectible figures, dolls, play sets, role play and more. The LEGO Group will also serve as global partner for the brand with a construction set inspired by scenes from the movie, while Rubie’s Costume Co. will add a new line of costumes and accessories. Additional licensees include Funko, Neca, Tonner Dolls, Madame Alexander, Hot Toys, Kotobukiya, Mezco, QMX, Schleich, Jada Toys, Sakar International and more to give her brand strength.

In addition to her eponymous solo film debut, Wonder Woman will also be seen in Warner Bros. Pictures’ upcoming film *Justice League* and “DC Super Hero Girls.” The former will feature for the first time on the big screen the DC heroine alongside Batman, Superman, Aquaman, The Flash and Cyborg, and will hit theaters Nov. 17.

For *Justice League*, WBCP will roll out a massive, worldwide merchandise program featuring the superheroes in myriad toy lines. Global master toy licensee Mattel will offer a full line that will include play sets, vehicles, figures, role play and more, and just like with *Wonder Woman*, The LEGO Group and Rubie’s Costume Co. will serve as global partners. Funko, Jakks Pacific and Jada Toys, among many others, will also support as toy partners.

The LEGO Group also has its hands in the highly anticipated follow-up to *The LEGO Movie*, *The LEGO Batman Movie*. The company recently teamed with WBCP to launch at retail more than 18 original construction sets to bring the action-



SUPER STRENGTH



adventure film—in theaters Feb. 10—and its characters to life.

The LEGO sets include a mini-figure collection with 20 exclusive characters from the movie. There is also a Batmobile set and Batcave break-in set, the latter of which lets fans defend the Batcave from The Penguin using a variety of Batsuits.

Meanwhile, featuring iconic heroes and villains from the DC Universe, “DC Super Hero Girls” follows the characters during their teenage, high school years as they learn about teamwork, friendship and hone their powers.

On the heels of multiple 2017 TIA Toy of the Year Award nominations, including License of the Year and Action Figure of the Year, “DC Super Hero Girls” licensing and merchandising program from WBCP and DC Entertainment continues to expand. WBCP and master toy partner Mattel have a slate of all-new action dolls, action figures and action role-play toys in the works, with rollout of the new characters, vehicles and gadgets slated for this spring.

In fact, the franchise’s Mattel collection features the industry’s first-ever 6-inch action figure designed for girls; the first 12-inch collection of action dolls featuring strong, athletic bodies that stand in heroic poses; and the first-ever action role-play toys for girls. In addition, The LEGO Group is featuring these characters and storylines in six original construction sets.

With regards to the small screen, WBCP and Mattel

have joined forces for two new toy lines in support of the animated series “Teen Titans Go!” and “Justice League Action.” The lines—aiming to capture the personalities of the superheroes—feature action figures, vehicles and more. Currently in its fourth season after premiering in 2013, “Teen Titans Go!” follows the adventures of superheroes Robin, Cyborg, Starfire, Raven and Beast Boy as they showcase the hilarity that ensues when they’re not on the job. The new collection will boast fan-favorite Funko figures featuring a lineup of the Teen Titan superheroes.

WBCP also plans to bring “Justice League Action” to NY Toy Fair for all the *Justice League* fans. Mattel will be launching its upcoming toy line of action figures. The show, which premiered in late 2016, aims to bring together all the elements of “where fun meets action.”

The company also has other endeavors up its sleeve for 2017, including supporting other DC TV programs such as “The Flash,” “Arrow” and “Gotham”; beloved franchises like *Harry Potter* and *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*; “The Big Bang Theory” and other shows; and “many more properties and groundbreaking content rounding out the studio’s unrivaled portfolio.” ©



CES 2017: NEW TECH TRENDS

Smart home, sleep and wireless audio were among the new product categories, trends and opportunities at this year's event. **by LAURA HELLER**

New technologies have a much quicker adoption cycle than in the past. For example, drones were high-tech, military-grade marvels when featured at CES 2015, yet now they are offered as children's toys such as the NERF Streaming Video Drone from Sakar—complete with cam copter.

"We have been looking for an opportunity to add licensed drones to our portfolio, and the NERF platform is the most natural brand with which to lead. NERF is identified with outdoor activity, and has generations of true fans and followers," says Liza Abrams, senior vice president of global licensing, Sakar. "The NERF drones not only exemplify NERF's power and performance, but also provide fans with a new way to engage with the iconic brand."

"Kids want the same or similar technology as their parents," says Ralph Sasson, chief operating officer, Vivator/Sakar. "We're a consumer electronics company first, we learn the trends and translate them to price points that parents want to pay."

The smart home category, or Internet of Things (IoT), was one of the biggest at this year's show and, while not new, is poised for explosive growth. The Consumer Technology Association projects the smart home category—including smart thermostats, smart smoke and carbon dioxide

detectors, cameras, smart locks and doorbells, smart home systems and smart switches—to reach sales of 29 million units in 2017, a 63 percent increase over 2016.

"IoT will be a strong market in the next two years, it's already a strong market," says Stu Seltzer, president, Seltzer Licensing Group. "Licensing is in the connected home already and is only going to grow.

There are probably 20 different companies in that market today, all vying for shelf space."

IoT offers a lot of opportunity for brands to license products, according to Seltzer. Many existing products are from unknown companies, and a respected brand on a relevant product can break through the noise and appeal to consumers uncertain about new technology.

But, as with all new technology, there are inherent challenges.

"The biggest fear is that all this technology will be obsolete in a year. It's changing fast," says Seltzer. "It's a challenge to keep up."

It's also important to make sure that partners have all the right certifications, are in compliance and are using the right platforms.

"There are some products we found that are popular in Europe, but don't have all the right certifications

for the U.S.," he adds.

While new technology always captures the spotlight at CES, even mature technologies still have a lot of room for new licenses. Mobile and wired headphones may be saturated, but whenever there's a hot property retailers will make room, notes Seltzer.

Sleep was also a hot category at CES, particularly among purveyors of fitness technology. There were pillows and mattresses that collect data and help to regulate body temperature or soothe users into a more restful night.

Under Armour introduced a new line of sleepwear that implements biometric technology to help users sleep better. It's also an area of focus for Under Armour when it comes to building out its licensing portfolio.

"We're not actively looking; we do best when we're invited into a space and find partners that have similar core values," says Glenn Silbert, senior vice president product and licensing, Under Armour. "If we're going to do something, it will

have to be different."

The brand created its new sleepwear in-house, but is open to expanding in the category through licensed opportunities.

"When you look at the system of sleep, a natural extension will be bedding," says Silbert. "When we do it, we're going to do it right."

Doing it right for Altec Lansing's first celebrity partnership meant collaborating with Nick Jonas for a line of Bluetooth audio accessories that includes three types of headphones and a wireless speaker.

The line was announced in June 2016 and launched in January in conjunction with CES. It is being sold through non-traditional electronics outlets including Zara and Top Shop, to better reach a younger customer, according to Ike Franco, co-founder and principal of the Infinity Group.

The collection includes three Bluetooth headphones with features such as voice activation technology, touch sensor controls, noise and wind cancellation. Prices range from \$59.99 to \$149.99. A Bluetooth speaker (\$99.99) features a touch control panel, caller ID and has 10 hours of battery life.

Since its acquisition by the Affinity Group, Altec Lansing has been forging partnerships with the goal of increasing relevance with today's customers: Millennials. SmartStream speakers aim to deliver a multi-room audio solution similar to Sonos, but at a lower price point. The Everything-Proof line adds eight portable, rugged wireless speakers that aren't just waterproof, they're snow proof "for the consumer of today that's on the go," says Franco.

Audio accessories remain a strong category for licensing with dozens of new products from Sakar including kid-safe Bluetooth headphones, microphones and karaoke machines from new brands that include "Shimmer and Shine," "Blaze and the Monster Machines," "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles," *Transformers*, Num Noms, Miraculous Lady Bug, My Little Pony, Powerpuff Girls, Power Rangers, DC Superhero Girls, Beat Bugs, and Thomas and Friends. ©



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